

BRUNO KALNIN

F. CIELENS' JEFERENTIAL ENCLOSURES

Following is the translation of an article by Kristaps
Dindzis in the Latvian-language newspaper Amerikans
Vestnesis, No 2, Boston, Mass., 15 June 1963.

Was K. Ulmanis a Homosexual?

The 15th of May in a New Light

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Envoy, Feliks Cielens, has just published the second volume of his memoirs, in which he discloses or asserts some facts of extreme importance in the history of Latvia, which had never been published before.

In 1937, when F. Cielens was a member of the leftist government of M. Skujenieks, he did not trust our state security agencies, especially the Political Administration which was headed by Ozolins, a member of the Democratic Center. With the agreement of M. Skujenieks, Cielens therefore established "a new special political intelligence organ" which was "under the Minister of Foreign Affairs." In addition to President Skujenieks, this was known only to the Social Democrats, Minister of Finance Bastjanis and State Controller Ivanovs, both of whom assigned the funds and received accounting reports.

The third party member, F. Cielens, used this money to pay the salaries of some young men, who had the job of shadowing

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES/METHOD/EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

politicians of the right wing, especially K. Bergs and K. Ulmanis, as well as General Radzins. Among foreign representatives, F. Cielens had the Lithuanian Legation under surveillance (at that time the authoritarian government of A. Voldemaras was in power in Lithuania), as well as British diplomats, especially the chief of the intelligence section, Melhormon. F. Cielens does not say whether he had any of the representatives of the Soviet Union under surveillance. However, immediately after taking over his official duties, he arranged a rabbit hunt at the farmstead of his mother-in-law in Cilomi for the Polish Ambassador Lukasovics and the Soviet Ambassador Aralov, who was accompanied by some Chokist.

F. Cielens appointed Sr Lt Sergejs Staprans as the chief of his secret intelligence organ; the latter was the brother of a well-known physician, also a party member. Cielens says the following about S. Staprans: "He was very well suited for this position, being a convinced Democrat, alert, quick, hard-working, and honest. Staprans also recruited some valuable informers, who were employed in fascist organizations "

However, S. Staprans' "record" does not justify the flattering comments made about him by Cielens. At some time in the past he had "kidnapped" Andrievs Niedra, who had then become Prime Minister. Staprans had reported on this to the deposed K. Ulmanis, who had admonished him: "Just don't drown him, don't drown him." Staprans took Niedra in a small boat to northern

Latvia; however, while spending the night ashore, Miodra escaped from his "abductor." He cut off his beard which he buried under the roots of a tree, and returned to his job in Liopaja.

On another occasion, Staprans aroused some talk when he slapped the face of Arvods Bergs in the hall of the Riga City Council because Bergs had made some statement he did not like. At that time the school director F. Dzonis also promised to slap Bergs for some other reason.

The restless nature of S. Staprans later took him to Argentina, where he published a newspaper El Ruso en Argentino (The Russian in Argentina), with a leftist slant. F. Ciclens writes in his book:

"Here I would like to publish some information which was given to me by my secret observers regarding the intimate personal life of Karlis Ulmanis. It was an open secret in Riga that Ulmanis was a homosexual, avoided women, but met with young men. The reports I received from Staprans frequently contained the comment: "Last night the favorite of Ulmanis, Vilhelms, again spent the night with him." Of course, it was not possible to know what Ulmanis and Vilhelms actually did during the night, whether they played cards, or domino, or some other nice games. However, those observations supported the rumors that Ulmanis was a homosexual. I would not have said anything here about this matter, if it had merely concerned the intimate personal life of Ulmanis.

Personally, I am of the opinion that homosexuality is a

special sickness and that no one should be subject to juridical or moral persecution because of it, with the exception of crimes against minors. However, if I make a public statement here about the homosexuality of Karlis Ulmanis, I am doing so for important political reasons. For the time being I will say only that Ulmanis' love for Vilhelms later acquired great social and political importance, since Ulmanis, after having become a dictator, appointed his Vilhelms to a very high and responsible position. Very soon the rumor spread in Riga that Vilhelms' wife was a Soviet spy. However, Ulmanis was so fond of his Vilhelms that he trusted him completely. Yes, truly, love makes people blind!.."

The question has arisen as to whether the former Minister of Foreign Affairs has not been too hasty in his assertions regarding the other former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President. It is true, K. Ulmanis was not known as a women's man, but perhaps politics and public life occupied him so completely that there was no room for any of the forms of love mentioned by P. Cielons. For example, the well-known Swedish professor of medicine at the Latvian University, Gaston Backman, used to say: "Science is my wife," but that did not make anyone suspect him of homosexuality. It is true that K. Ulmanis was often seen in the company of V. Muntors, but "rumors" are not the same as an "open secret" which has to be confirmed by evidence.

It is possible that Muntors, who had known how to make

himself indispensable to Umanis. had been in the service of the Russians even earlier. according to the opinions of some Latvian journalists living abroad. By the way, in other parts of the book under review P. Cielens praises the abilities and industriousness of Munters. as well as the "economic information" collected by him. He also mentions Munters as a witness to the positive evaluation of the trade agreement concluded with Soviet Russia by him.

In addition to Styrans and his student-informers, P. Cielens also had a "collegium" for "democratization" of the Army during the time he was in office as minister. He calls it his "chief staff" for "suppressing the anti-democratic rebellion." Here too he mentions some names which do not inspire a great deal of confidence. In addition to Styrans, he mentions Col Elavins, who later became a general and went over to the Bolsheviks. Then. Lt Col Freimanis who, if we are not mistaken, collaborated with the Germans. The committee also included Lt Col V. Ozols who joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. but later served in our Army. Minister Bangorakis of the leftist government had turned down Cielens' suggestion to promote Ozols to a higher position. During World War II. Ozols was in Paris, where he was said to have been in the service of the Russians. He returned to Occupied Latvia. where he gave lectures ~~at~~ on military sciences.

P. Cielens considered the 4th Valmiera Infantry Regiment to be loyal to democracy. i.e. to the socialists, and he also relied

at one time a member of P. Cielens' "staff." K. Ulmanis had exiled V. Ozols from Latvia some time before 15 May, but at the last moment he had still told Menders that it was necessary to take security measures to guard against the followers of Ozols.

In the fateful month of May, the Benjamins came to see P. Cielens in Paris: they were probably worried about their millions. They told him they had reliable information that K. Ulmanis was planning a coup d'etat. One week before the "overthrow" Kuznetsov Skujonietis arrived to visit his friend from the days of the Revolution, and he confirmed this information. Kuznetsov hinted that he himself would also take part in the new government. "You could stay here as an envoy, if you like," he told Cielens at the time he was leaving.

Cielens sent the important information to party chairman Menders in Riga, asking him to delay the coup d'etat. However, Menders (in the words of Cielens) was "like a man in a dream." Even when Bruno Kalnins warned him, he stubbornly repeated that Ulmanis was a convinced Democrat, who would not violate the Constitution. Menders considered Hugo Celmins, leader of the moderate wing of the Peasants' Union, to be much more dangerous. Finally, on the day of the overthrow, Menders was told that the "Aizsargi" [National Guards] from the rural regions were approaching Riga. He considered it best to ask Ulmanis himself, who reassured the experienced "conspirator" by saying that safety measures were being taken to guard against an uprising of Col Ozols' followers.

In several chapters of the book, P. Cielens gives vent to his

on 350 worker-athletes, under the command of Bruno Kalnins. To arm them, P. Cielens had purchased weapons abroad: these weapons were found in the night of 15 May at the homes of the deputies B. Kalnins, P. Ulpe and J. Colms. The forces "subordinated" to Cielens, the worker-athletes and the 4th Infantry Regiment, had already once in the past been "mobilized" and had actually held the city of Riga in their power. This happened at the time when P. Cielens was Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Parliament had voted for the ratification of the treaty he had concluded with the Soviet Union. If anything had gone wrong with the voting, it would have been necessary only to press a button and perhaps even then, in 1937, we would have been ruled in by a dictatorship, only headed by different persons.

For quite some time before 15 May 1934 and the changes following it, the idea of a dictatorship had been "in the air." Mariss Vetra relates in his memoirs that an intermediary from the group of Col V. Ozols had approached him and offered him the position of Minister of Education. When on a certain morning in May Vetra arrived for rehearsals at the Opera, Inspector O. Krolls told him what had happened. Then M. Vetra asked who had carried out the coup d'etat and was greatly relieved when he heard the names of Ulmanis and Balodis, since it would now apparently not be necessary for him to assume the job of Minister of Education.

Fr. Menders, at that time leader of the Social Democrats, was most of all afraid of this same Ozols, even though Ozols was

anger against the former Social-Democrat Party government, accusing it of being too credulous and shortsighted. However, from our present point of view, the undisturbed events of May 15th may have had a different explanation. S. Eisinger and J. Eisinger point to the testimony of A. Kluge that, before the events of May 15th the organisers of this action had "sounded out" Moscow and, apparently, had received an affirmative answer. One should remember that W. Mendern, who is in light at this time, was the representative of the leftist wing of his party and was oriented toward Moscow. He may have been informed of everything in advance and may have received instructions not to take any countermeasures.

This is one of the most important circumstances which is revealed in the new volume of A. Gielens' memoirs. The book also contains a great deal of other information to which we shall refer another time.

5631
GSC: DC-8725